

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
JANUARY 22, 2014
REGULAR SESSION

Members Present: Nelson Almeida, Gary Sagar, Michael Brady, David Parker

Absent: Robert McLintock

Interim Town Administrator: Gary Stenhouse

Chairman Almeida called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and moment of silence.

He advised that in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 20, anybody recording must notify the Chair.

Mrs. Christine Allen, Chair of the Water District, objected to the first item in Executive Session. She said the Water District was not notified. She felt this item needs to be eliminated or in Open Session. She asked if the Town is a litigant in this action.

Mr. Stenhouse advised that he spoke to Atty. Ilana Quirk who advised it was perfectly acceptable to be in Executive Session. One of the parties intends to speak to town employees and the Board does not know what anybody is going to say.

Mr. Brady noted that possible strategy is never discussed in Open Session.

Executive Assistant Anne Rogers advised that it was listed as per the Open Meeting Law.

Mrs. Allen said that the Seekonk Water District is a separate municipal entity created under the State legislature.

APPOINTMENT AND SWEARING IN

Confirm Appointment of Kyle Laprade as Firefighter, Town Clerk to Swear In

Chief Alan Jack introduced Mr. Laprade. He will be a probationary firefighter/paramedic. He voluntarily signed the Town's training reimbursement agreement pledging to remain an employee of the Town of Seekonk for five years.

A motion was made by Mr. Sagar, seconded by Mr. Parker, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To appoint Kyle Laprade as a probationary firefighter/paramedic.

Mrs. Parker swore in Mr. Laprade.

January 22, 2014

-2-

WELCOME BOARD OF SELECTMEN FROM THE TOWN OF DIGTON

Postponed. Chairman Almeida advised they are not ready to come before the Board at this time.

ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Request from Animal Control to Accept Two (2) Donations of \$250 Each for the Animal Shelter

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Sagar, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To accept the two donations of \$250 each for the animal shelter.

Vote to Continue to Endorse Save-A-Pet Society

Vote to Accept Gifts, Monetary and Tangible, Donated by the Save-A-Pet Society to the Animal Shelter During the Year 2014

President of the Save-A-Pet Society Patricia Cloutier asked for renewal of the endorsement from the Board.

Mr. Sagar said that he supports it. He questioned why it has to be done every year.

Mrs. Cloutier replied that she understood it was because the members of the Board change every year.

Mr. Parker said it started about 10 years ago. Several letters go out to organizations asking for donations. The endorsement letter is an introduction to the Save-A-Pet organization.

Mrs. Cloutier noted the second letter authorizes Save-A-Pet to donate to the animal shelter.

A motion was made by Mr. Sagar, seconded by Mr. Parker, and it was unanimously

VOTED: That the Board of Selectmen continues to endorse the Save-A-Pet Society and authorizes the animal shelter to accept gifts, monetary and tangible, donated by the Save-A-Pet Society during the year 2014.

Chairman Almeida thanked Mrs. Cloutier, the Safe-A-Pet Society, and supporters.

Mrs. Cloutier advised the Save-A-Pet auction is scheduled for March 25-27, 2014.

As Chairperson of the Animal Shelter Building Committee, Mrs. Cloutier said that she would come before the Board with an update in February.

OLD BUSINESS

Continued Discussion and Vote on Minor Charter Amendments to be Included on the Warrant for the February 18, 2014 Special Town Meeting

Mr. Sagar noted that Atty. Goldberg had added a sentence to each of them to make it clearer.

Chairman Almeida stated that these changes would allot the town administrator to oversee all Town Hall departments.

Mr. Brady felt it raised a big issue re: collective bargaining. He was satisfied that the changes made by Atty. Goldberg address the concerns on both sides.

A motion was made by Mr. Sagar, seconded by Mr. Brady, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To include the charter amendments as submitted by Atty. Goldberg on the warrant article for the Special Town Meeting of February 18, 2014.

Discussion on Funding Construction of Additional Parking at the Library to be Included on the Warrant for the February 18, 2014 Special Town Meeting

Mr. Sagar felt that MCIC is the proper funding source.

A motion was made by Mr. Sagar, seconded by Mr. Parker, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the article to fund construction of additional parking at the library (\$90,000) on the warrant for the February 18, 2014 Special Town Meeting.

Library Director Peter Fuller was in attendance.

Mr. Brady stated the Finance Committee should know the amount.

Continued Discussion on Warrant Articles for February 18, 2014 Special Town Meeting

In accordance with the present by-law, Mr. Stenhouse stated that the warrant has to be posted by February 3, 2014. He suggested the Board meet on January 29th.

A motion was made by Mr. Sagar, seconded by Mr. Parker, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To close the warrant on Tuesday, January 28, 2014, and schedule a Board of Selectmen meeting for January 29, 2014, at 6 p.m.

Mr. Sagar suggested the Board could go through some of the budget items at that meeting.

Mr. John Alves, Chairman of the Community Preservation Committee, said he was unprepared to speak on it right now, but he submitted a written request for \$250,000 for the Seekonk Commons application. The CPC needs to get specific use for the money. He will submit the proper worded article.

COMMUNITY SPEAKS (FIRST SESSION)

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Approve Request from In Site Engineering Services, LLC to Place Fill at Taunton Avenue and Morris Avenue - Lot Known as Assessors Plat 12 – Lots 1,2,5-9, 18-40, 498

Mr. Paul D. Carlson, P.E. of In Site Engineering Services respectfully requested permission to fill the existing lots with about 8,000 yards of material to level the site for preparation of sale. It was approved by the Conservation Commission on October. 22, 2012.

Mr. Sagar asked if this was in accordance with By-law Category 17b Placement of Fill. This by-law is old and should be removed.

Mr. Sagar motioned, Mr. Parker seconded, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the request from In Site Engineering Services, LLC to place fill at Taunton Avenue and Morris Avenue Lot known as Assessors Plat 12 – Lots 1,2,5-9, 18-40 and 498.

Consider Appointment to Finance Committee with Town Moderator

Town Moderator Michelle Hines advised that she appointed David Saad to the Finance Committee. He needs to be sworn in by the Town Clerk.

She also made appointments to the Library Facilities Study Committee, which was under Warrant Article 13 at the last Town Meeting.

She introduced Ann Miller and Bill Barker. Other members not in attendance are Jackie Proulx, Alyssa Richard, Sonig Schiller, Steve Self, and Charles Waddington.

The first meeting will be on February 20, 2014 at the library.

Mr. Sagar noted that Mr. Saad has to resign as alternate on the ZBA.

Ms. Hines invited residents to fill out talent bank forms for several vacancies. There are two openings on the MCIC (moderator appointments). It is getting to the point where there are not enough members for a quorum. Five people are needed for the by-law study committee.

Confirm Appointment of William McDonough as Alternate Building Commissioner

Mr. Stenhouse advised that Mr. John Santos will continue as interim until a full time commissioner is appointed.

Mr. McDonough is currently the building commissioner in Rehoboth. He was a candidate in Seekonk when Mrs. McNeil was hired.

Mr. Stenhouse recommended the Board confirm the appointment of Mr. McDonough as alternate building commissioner.

A motion was made by Mr. Sagar, seconded by Mr. Parker, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To appoint Mr. William McDonough as Alternate Building Commissioner.

Mr. Stenhouse noted that the full time commissioner position had been advertised four times.

Mr. Alexander and he will interview candidates.

Consider Appointment of Sharon Clarke to Cultural Council as Recommended by Assistant Town Administrator

A motion was made by Mr. Sagar, seconded by Mr. Parker, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the appointment of Sharon Clarke to the Cultural Council.

Consider Appointment of Christopher Campbell as Communications Director

Withdrawn at the request of Mr. Stenhouse.

Discussion on Medical Marijuana Zoning Bylaw Amendment and Refer to Planning for Public Hearing

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Brady, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To refer the medical marijuana zoning bylaw amendment to Planning for a Public Hearing.

Mr. Brady said he would like to see under Public Safety if anyone is growing or cultivating marijuana there has to be restrictions if there are minors.

Discussion on Zoning Bylaw Reorganization Amendment and Refer to Planning for Public Hearing

A motion was made by Mr. Sagar, seconded by Mr. Parker, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To refer the zoning bylaw reorganization amendment to Planning for Public Hearing.

Consider Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes from December 4, 2013 and December 18, 2013

A motion was made by Mr. Sagar, seconded by Mr. Parker, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To accept the regular session minutes of December 4, 2013 and December 18, 2013.

OTHER BUSINESS

Discuss Other Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chairman 48 Hours Before the Meeting

None.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Accept, with regret, the Resignation of Building Commissioner John Santos
Accept, with regret, the Resignation of Firefighter Beau Jacques
Accept, with regret, the Resignation of Dispatcher Thomas Pimental

Mr. Stenhouse advised that dispatcher Thomas Pimental resigned rather abruptly by e-mail. Chief Mace and he interviewed two qualified candidates that were on the list.

A motion was made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Brady, and it was unanimously

VOTED: To accept, with regret, the resignation of building commissioner John Santos, firefighter Beau Jacques, and dispatcher Thomas Pimental.

Chairman Almeida asked why Mr. Santos resigned.

Mr. Stenhouse said he did not want to work five days a week. It is a union position. It might be different if it were contracted.

Mr. Brady noted it's too bad the employee didn't wait until June when contracts expire.

Mr. Parker was surprised that he wasn't interested in the part time position.

Rabies Clinic

Mr. Stenhouse announced a rabies clinic scheduled for Saturday, March 8, 2014, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon at DPW.

Update on Town Administrator Recruitment

Mr. Stenhouse reported that he had previously reported there were 14 candidates in the running. A team from MRI, including him, interviewed those 14 individuals by telephone last Friday and Monday. It has now been narrowed down to five candidates who on paper and oral interview have the qualifications. They are all presently employed somewhere.

He suggested that a team from MRI interview the candidates here in Seekonk on Wednesday, February 5, 2014, and present three finalists to the Board for interviews starting at 4 p.m.

Mr. Sagar asked if they should interview the five candidates.

Mr. Stenhouse said it would be up to his supervisor.

He said that MRI would do a background check on the candidate selected. The Board would have to negotiate with that person. That individual would have to give notice at the present employment.

Mr. Stenhouse stated that he would like to be out of Seekonk no later than the end of February. He felt the Town is in good hands with Mr. Alexander.

Chairman Almeida asked how long they should interview each candidate.

Mr. Stenhouse suggested one hour to 1 ½ hours per person in open session.

Chairman Almeida and Mr. Brady would like to keep it at three finalists. They would defer to the recommendation of the MRI team.

Mr. Parker asked if Mr. Gould from MRI would prepare questions.

Mr. Stenhouse advised that Mr. Gould and he would be present for the daytime interviews but not at the Board meeting.

Mr. Sagar recognized the years Mr. Stenhouse has in the business.

Update on Bond Rating

Mr. Stenhouse stated that this town should be very proud that the bond rating went from AA- to AA+. He felt the report speaks very well for how this town has been governed. It has to do with the treasurer, finance director, finance committee, town meeting, board of selectmen and staff.

Mr. Brady said the vast majority of them are committed to keep adequate reserve funding and Town Meeting has gone along with that. The stabilization account is at over \$2.7M. There is over \$500,000 in free cash and over \$500,000 in the municipal capital stabilization fund. He commended the Board of Selectmen, the Finance Board, the Municipal Capital Improvement Committee and the School Committee.

Mr. Sagar agreed that it is a team effort.

Mr. Parker noted that Mrs. DeFontes saved ¼ % in refinancing the debt.

Mr. Sagar noted that Mrs. Nolan had said she applied for the town administrator position because of the Town's financial position.

Mr. Brady commended all those who have been diligent making sure there is no wasteful spending.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN LIAISON REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Mr. Sagar advised that he would be available to meet with any board and/or committee prior to town meeting to discuss the charter changes.

Mr. Brady suggested that Atty. Goldberg should also be involved.

Mr. Sagar suggested they should schedule an informational session on TV9.

He said he received a call from a RI state representative who is also a police officer in Pawtucket. It concerns Brook Street. That is a state road. A resolution was passed in the City Council banning trucks. They wanted permission to put signage on Newman Avenue.

Mr. Brady recommended not doing that. He will call the state representative.

Mrs. Christine Allen who lives on Brook Street said there are very few houses on that street. She suggested there should be a weight limit.

Chairman Almeida advised that the Taste of the Town sponsored by the Kiwanis Club is scheduled for Tuesday, February 4, 2014 from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Pawtucket Country Club. It was always held at Johnson & Wales at no charge. The new owners wanted to charge \$2,000 to rent the facility.

January 22, 2014

-9-

Chairman Almeida commended DPW workers for their efforts during the recent snowstorm and the police and fire for protecting the Town.

Mr. Stenhouse said he talked to Mr. Lamoureux, Chief Mace, and Mr. Alexander and the decision was made to open Town Hall. Employees were asked to use their discretion. Everybody was at work by 9:15 a.m.

Chairman Almeida asked how employees are notified.

Gary Stenhouse said there's a telephone tree and the use of e-mail. Mr. Alexander did a lot of the calling.

Mr. Parker would like to know what percentage of the snow budget had been used.

Mr. Stenhouse would have that information for the next meeting.

COMMUNITY SPEAKS (SECOND SESSION)

Mr. David Saad verified that he would have to resign from the ZBA in order to serve on the Finance Committee.

Mr. Parker explained that, as per charter, a member of the Finance Committee cannot serve on any other board. Mr. Saad would have to send the town clerk a letter of resignation.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:45 p.m. Mr. Sagar motioned, seconded by Mr. Brady, to go into Executive Session to discuss pending litigation: Najas v. Water District, continued discussion on real estate negotiations for the senior center per M.G.L. Chapter 39, Section 23B(6), 442 Taunton Avenue Purchase and Sales, and to consider approval of Executive Session minutes of December 18, 2013; to reconvene in Open Session, if necessary.

The vote: Mr. Sagar – Aye; Mr. Brady – Aye; Chairman Almeida – Aye; Mr. Parker Aye; except on (B) continued discussion on real estate negotiations for the senior center – Abstained.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Brady, Clerk

Patricia Gamer, Secretary